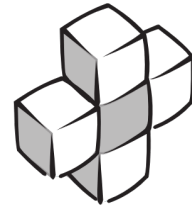


SMACC

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ



Bible Study Series:

Philippians



Our Mission:

To glorify God together in response to his grace

by making disciples of Jesus Christ

About These Studies

These studies were written by various SMACC leaders for use among university students. You are most welcome to use and adapt these studies for your own context. Where you do so please provide the following acknowledgment.

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Study 1: “Partners in the Gospel” (Philippians 1:1-11)

Getting Started

1. If church was a play – would you feel more like the audience or the cast? Why?
2. How would you describe your relationship with other Christians at church? Close/Distant, joyful/frustrating, etc.?

Context

3. Read Acts 16:14-40. What happened when Paul first went to Philippi?

Skim read the book of Philippians

4. What is Paul’s situation now as he writes? (1:12, 1:19-22, 1:29-30)
5. What do we learn of the relationship between the Philippians and Paul? (1:3-7, 2:25, 4:1, 4:10, 4:14-15)
6. What difficulties are the Philippians facing (1:29-30, 3:2, 3:17-18)
7. Why does Paul write? What seem to be the major topics?
1:4; 18, 3:1, 4:1, 4:4-7
1:5-7, 4:14-15
1:27-28, 2:1-2
2:14-16
3:13-14, 3:20

Digging In

Read Philippians 1:1-11

8. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

9. Why does Paul feel so joyful?

10. Why does Paul express his joy in thanks and prayer to God?

11. What do Paul and the Philippians have in common?

12. What does Paul pray for his gospel partners? What is his ultimate desire for them?

Application

13. What is the main thing this passage teaches us?

14. How does this passage apply to us?

Study 2: “The Gospel-Driven Life” (Philippians 1:12-26)

Getting Started

1. What are your goals in life? What things drive you?
(Hint: What do you think about most often? What factors influences your decisions?)
2. How do you respond when life doesn't go as you hoped/planned?

Digging In

Read Philippians 1:12-26

3. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

4. What is Paul's situation as he writes?
5. How does he feel about his situation? Would you react in the same way?
6. What Paul expect to happen to him? How does he feel about those alternatives?

7. What does Paul mean when he says “to live is Christ and to die is gain”? (21)?

8. Can anything stop him from achieving his goal? What if you imprison him, kill him, release him?

9. To summarise: what drives Paul?

Application

10. What is the main thing this passage teaches us?

11. How does this passage apply to us?

12. What questions do you still have?

Study 3: “Worthy of the Gospel” (Philippians 1:27-2:11)

Getting Started

1. Do you think churches are more often united or divided? Why?
2. How have you seen churches strive for unity with one another? What is often the basis of that “unity”?

Digging In

Read Philippians 1:27-2:11

3. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

4. How does Paul describe a life “worthy of the gospel”?
5. Paul says “it has been granted” to the Philippians, not only to believe in Christ, but suffer for him? How is suffering a gift? Do you think of it that way?
6. Where in the passage do you see a call for unity? (Look for words like “one”, “same”, “like”?) What is the basis for Paul’s call to unity (v1)?
7. What attitudes does Paul encourage (v1-4)? Why are they necessary for unity?

8. How is Christ the ultimate example of the qualities of verses 2-4?

9. What happens to Christ in the end? How ought that to encourage us to be humble servants?

Thinking It Through

10. What is the main thing this passage teaches us?

11. How does this passage apply to us?

12. What questions do you still have?

Application

13. How accurate would it be to describe your life as “worthy of the gospel of Christ”? How do you need to change?

14. How often do you put the interests of others before your own? What might it look for you to begin doing this?

15. Are you afraid of suffering for living as a Christian? How does this passage challenge and encourage you?

16. What do you personally need to do/change in order to be unified with your brothers and sisters in Christ? Are there attitudes you need to change or people you need to talk to?

Prayer:

- Pray for yourself and your church, that you may “contend as one man for the faith of the gospel”.
- Ask God to change you where necessary—to give you a concern for the interests of others over your own.
- Thank Jesus for the depths he descended to for your sake. Ask God to conform you to the likeness of Jesus more and more

Study 4: “Shining Like Stars” (Philippians 2:12-30)

Getting Started

1. Do people around you look at your life and know that you are a Christian? Why? Why not?

Context

In chapter 1, we were confronted with Paul’s gospel-driven life. The progress of the gospel was so important to Paul that he was willing to live and die for Christ. Last week we saw that Paul exhorted the Philippians themselves to live a life worthy of the gospel, just like him (1:27). Looking back to 1:27-2:11 what would that look like? What would motivate them?

Digging In

Read Philippians 2:12-30

2. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

3. What does Paul command the Philippians to do? What does this mean? (v12)
4. How does v13 relate? How might knowing God is at work in you encourage you to obediently work out your salvation? (cf. 1:6 and 1:29)
5. What do you think of “Let go and let God” as an approach to Christian growth? Who is responsible for us living a life worthy of the Lord?

6. What does Paul exhort the Christians to do in v14-16? Why?

7. Would you stand out from the crowd if you did everything without complaining or arguing? Why?

8. What is Paul's attitude to the growth of the Philippians? (16-18)

9. In verses 19-30, we're given two very different examples of people 'living lives worthy of the gospel' – Timothy and Epaphroditus.
 - a. What is Timothy like? In what way is he an example to follow?

 - b. What is Epaphroditus like? In what way is he an example to follow?

10. How are both Timothy & Epaphroditus like Christ? (cf. 2:5-11)

11. What is Paul's purpose in sending Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippians? How should such people be treated?

Thinking Things Through

12. What is the main thing this passage teaches us?

13. What questions do you still have?

Application

14. In what areas do you need to work at that you will an obedient child living a life worthy of the gospel?

15. Is your life shining as a light for Christ in this world? How is your life more like the world than Jesus?

16. Do you often grumble and argue? Why? How does this compromise your witness to Christ?

17. How do the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus encourage and challenge you to live a life worthy of the gospel?

Prayer

- Pray that God will give you the will to keep working at becoming like Christ
- Pray for the joy of the Spirit to overwhelm the spirit of complaint and argument in your heart.
- Give thanks for the Christlikeness of those you know. Pray that God will keep them living that way and help us to emulate them.

Study 5: “True Confidence” (Philippians 3:1-11)

Getting Started

1. Who do you think of as impressive? It could be a sportsperson, musician, actor, preacher, etc. Why?

2. What are some of the things in life which are very important to you? Why are they important to you?

Context

So far in Philippians - we have been considering what it means to live a life worthy of the gospel. So far, we've seen that the advancement of the gospel is more important than my personal circumstances, and that we should strive together to see the gospel advance in unity and humility, even if it means we must suffer, just as Christ humbled himself for us.

Digging In

3. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

4. What is the relationship between Paul's command to 'rejoice in the Lord' (v1) and the warning about the false teachers (v2)?

5. Who does Paul warn the Philippians to be wary of? Why does Paul use such strong language to describe them? (2-3)

6. What reasons might Paul have had for putting “confidence in the flesh”? What is so “impressive” about these things? (4-6)

7. How does Paul now view the “gain” he had from these things? What caused this radical reassessment? (7-8)

8. What “gain” does Paul have from knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord? (9-11)

9. Paul makes two comparisons in verses 8 & 9. Do you think those things are really so mutually exclusive? Why or why not?

10. What is Paul’s ultimate treasure & goal in life?

Application

11. When God asks us “Why should I let you into heaven?” what will matter the most - my achievements, or something else?

12. In his past, Paul counted on his religious standing and status to be counted as righteous before God. What things might you be tempted to put your confidence in apart from Christ?

13. What might be some of the symptoms that we are putting our confidence in these things instead of Christ? How can avoid doing this?

14. Why is it so difficult to think of all our achievements as nothing?

15. Paul's treasure and goal in life was "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (v10). At this point in your life, what seems to be more important to you than the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus" (v8)?

16. If everything else is worthless compared to knowing Christ, how will that affect what you are striving for in life? (re-consider your answer to Q2)

Prayer:

- Thank God for the righteousness we can have by trusting in what Jesus has done for us.
- Pray that God will help us never to look to our own works or achievements to be accepted by God.
- Pray that we would make it our treasure and goal in life to know Christ as our Lord.

Study 6: “Going for Glory” (Philippians 3:12-4:1)

Getting Started

1. How important is it to have a goal in life?
2. If someone observed everything you did, said and thought in the last week, what might they think your goal in life is?

Context

3. Look back to 3:8-11. What was Paul’s goal in life?

Digging In

Read Philippians 3:12-4:1

4. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

5. What is Paul striving for? Why?
6. In striving forward, what does Paul focus on? What doesn’t he focus on?
7. If we’ve already been declared righteous (v9), why do we need to press on?

8. Why is it important to find good examples to imitate as we strive forward?

9. What makes someone an enemy of the cross of Christ? What will happen to them? How does Paul feel about them?

10. How are Christians different from those described in verse 18-19? What will that look like in practice?

Application

11. Is your mind set on heaven or earth? How are you tempted to pursue comfort and avoid suffering, instead of living for heaven?

12. How would you live differently if your eye was on heaven?

13. Who might be a good example that you could imitate?

14. Can you think of modern examples of “enemies of the cross”? How can you avoid being one yourself?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would enable us to press on and strive for heaven.
- Give thanks for those who have modelled heavenly citizenship.
- If you find yourself thinking differently to Paul, pray that God will make it clear to you.

Study 7: “Peace & Partnership” (Philippians 4:2-23)

Getting Started

1. How do hardships affect you in the Christian life? Do you feel overwhelmed with stress and bitterness, or feel joy and peace?

Context

2. Read 1:3-5, 1:18-19, 1:25-26, 2:17-18, 2:28-30, 3:1. 4:1, 4:4. What brings joy in the Christian life? Does it depend on circumstances?

Digging In

Read Philippians 4:2-23

3. Identify the main sections and give them a short title

Verses	Title

Read Philippians 4:2-9

4. How does Paul seek to bring these women back to peace and gospel partnership?

5. Paul urges the Philippians to “rejoice in the “Lord”. How does anxiety often rob us of joy?

6. What things do you tend to be anxious about? How does it affect you?

7. How does Paul urge us to deal with anxiety? What is the result?

8. Read Psalm 145:13-20. What does it mean that the Lord is near? How is this an encouragement in the midst of anxiety?

9. "You are what you think". Do you agree with this statement?

10. What kinds of things do we often fill our minds with? What kind of thoughts are we to have?

Read Philippians 4:10-20

11. How did Paul learn to be content? What is his secret of contentment?

12. When Paul says, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (v13), what does he mean? What does he not mean? What are the "all things"?

13. If you aren't content now (whatever your circumstances), then you won't be content when your circumstances change. Do you agree?

14. How do the Philippians express their gospel partnership in 4:14-20? How are they different from the other churches?

Application

15. Are there any Christians in your life with whom you have had a falling out? What might you need to do?

16. Are you someone who is filled with joy and peace, or do you often find yourself being anxious about many things?

17. What are you tempted to be discontent about? How does what you learnt today help you to be content?

18. Do you give generously towards gospel ministry? Why/why not?

19. How could you be supporting gospel ministry at church and outside church?

Reflection

What is one thing you have been personally challenged or encouraged by through the book of Philippians? Thank God and pray about these things as a group.